

16. *Mobilization of the Emergency Fire Service.*—It will be seen from the note below that the whole of this Service had been organized on a part-time basis. In the principal centres the same difficulties applied to the emergency firemen as to the assembly, after the alarm, of the fire-watchers (paragraph 13). It was therefore decided, both for this reason and to step up the standard of training, to effect a partial mobilization. Practically all the personnel were engaged in essential industry and were therefore not available for full-time duty unless the Fire Service was placed on the same man-power basis as the Army. The arrangement made was that the men were allowed to continue at their ordinary work, but were regarded as being on continuous duty and required to wear uniform at all times. Action stations were established both in the commercial and residential areas, at which pumps and equipment were stored. A sufficient number of these was provided with billeting arrangements, and a proportion of the personnel (one-third at Auckland and Wellington and one-fifth at Christchurch and Dunedin) were required to report direct to action stations after leaving their work throughout their week's tour of duty. During working-hours all personnel were required to report on alarm to the regular fire-station or emergency action station nearest to their place of occupation. The men not on billeted duty were rostered to the suburban action stations nearest to their homes under instructions to report there on the sounding of the siren. The billeted crews were required to do not less than fourteen hours' training—either lectures or practical work—during each week's tour of duty. In the secondary centres the Service was not mobilized, it being considered that an effective turnout could be obtained by the men reporting on the alarm to the action stations nearest to their homes or place of business.

#### CO-ORDINATION AND REINFORCEMENT

17. The regulations which constituted the Emergency Fire Service in 1941 provided for the appointment of Dominion Fire Controller and four District Fire Controllers (the positions were filled by the Inspector of Fire Brigades and Messrs. W. L. Wilson, C. A. Woolley, A. Morrison, and F. C. Laidlaw). It had been recognized that it would be impracticable, and for that matter unnecessary, to provide in each vulnerable centre sufficient equipment and trained personnel to give reasonable protection against incendiary attack on a major scale. The intention was that the Fire Services should be organized parallel with, rather than as an integral part of, the general Civil Defence services. Each local Fire Service unit, consisting of combined regular and emergency personnel, would thus operate with and under the control of the local Civil Defence officers in the event of local attack, but would be under the orders of the District Fire Controller for reinforcement if the attack occurred elsewhere or the tactical situation necessitated this. With the entry of Japan into the war the question of reinforcement became an urgent one. It was at this stage that the disadvantages from an emergency standpoint of the extremely decentralized control of our regular fire service became apparent. Most of the controlling authorities, both Fire Boards and municipalities, were insistent that their fire-service units would not be made available for service elsewhere until they were themselves satisfied that the attack would not extend to their district. The only concession that could be obtained was that during the extreme hose shortage of the early months of 1942 it was agreed that a limited proportion of the hose-supply, together with any regular or auxiliary brigadesmen surplus to immediate local requirements, were to be made available immediately on request from the centre attacked.

18. A conference of the District Fire Controllers and the District E.F.S. Commanders was therefore called to consider the position. The following recommendations were made to Government:—

- (1) That the District (Regional) Fire Controllers should be relieved of regular fire-brigade duty and properly empowered to organize and enforce the necessary reinforcement system within their respective districts. It was proposed that these should correspond with the Civil Defence regional areas then being set up.
- (2) That the Regional Fire Controllers so appointed should have complete operational control within their districts.
- (3) That the Dominion Fire Controller should be responsible for administration, equipment supply, inter-regional communications, and general co-ordination, but not for operational control.
- (4) That the necessary staff should be provided at both headquarters and regional levels.

19. Arrangements had been made early in 1942 for an officer to be seconded from the National Fire Service in Britain to advise on fire-defence matters. This officer, Assistant Fire Force Commander A. D. Wilson, arrived in New Zealand shortly after the above recommendations were made. His report confirmed them in general, but recommended the appointment of a headquarters technical officer for operational control in addition to the administrative headquarters, an increase in the supply of fire hose and large pumps, and the mobilization of 200 of the emergency personnel on a full-time basis with a corresponding reduction in the part-time emergency staff. He also recommended the concentration of equipment in multiple-unit stations and the adoption of the system of communications which had proved effective in Britain. He confirmed the recommendations previously made as to supply of transport and equipment.

20. No action was taken to give legislative effect to the recommendations from either source. This was due in the first instance to delays arising from the reversion from War Administration to War Cabinet control of defence activities and, after the end of 1942, to the improved position in the Pacific war area. This, and the installation of radar equipment, justified a more sanguine view of the fire-defence position. A memorandum setting out the principal recommendations made was, however, sent from Civil Defence Headquarters in August, 1942, to all brigade-controlling authorities and Civil Defence district headquarters. This stressed the importance of ensuring adequate and immediate reinforcement of the Fire Service in any centre attacked and solicited the sympathetic co-operation of both the Civil Defence and brigade-controlling authorities. Arrangements were made for each District Fire Controller to make a complete inspection of his district, and the general powers given by the 1941 regulations were utilized by the Dominion Fire Controller to give such preliminary effect to the recommendations as was practicable without specific legislative authority.

#### NATIONAL FIRE COUNCIL

21. It had been pointed out to Government in 1942 that the district control and reinforcement scheme would not be effective unless it obtained the full co-operation of the controlling authorities and both branches of the regular fire service. It was therefore recommended that the implementing regulations should provide for the setting-up of an administrative body containing representatives both of the Fire Boards and the local authorities and also of the Service organizations. It was